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August 8, 1964

OPLAN 34A

(1)

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Secretary

THROUGH: S/S

FROM: S/VN - Michael V. Forrestal

SUBJECT: OPLAN 34 A

The answer to your question of last night on whether the operations under OPLAN 34A have been stood down remains "yes".

Previously approved plans call for a resumption of aerial resupply drops on the 15th of this month; but I have a clear understanding with Defense that we will be consulted before these plans are executed.

You should also know that CINCPAC has recommended another DESOTO Patrol for the 12th. I am trying to insure that we are consulted on this one too before it is finally authorized.

One thing that may be troubling you, as it has troubled me, is that some of us did not know that the OPLAN 34A actions against the Vinh Son radar post and Ron on the night of August 3rd (about the same time as the second destroyer incident) had been authorized. I checked this on August 4th with Cy Vance and Mac Bundy, both of whom told me that these actions had been approved at the White House on the previous Sunday, August 2nd. The implication was that the Department had acquiesced at that time.

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S/VN-Michael V. Forrestal

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I think it is very important for the Department to review its own procedures for handling 303 Committee actions, so that somebody who is responsible for the area passes on all these activities just prior to an execution order. At present, many of these activities are planned weeks and even months in advance, and the opportunity for review in light of any changed political circumstances is not adequate.

I would be very happy to try to work out some mechanics with Ambassador Thompson and INR, at least as far as Southeast Asia is concerned.

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